

# “LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT”

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In the summer of 1960, I was just starting my junior year at Granger High School in a suburb of Salt Lake City. I had just received my driver's license and like most other boys of that age, I was in love with girls and cars. The local hangout in Granger was the Duchess Drive-in. The Duchess was no different than the many other drive-ins around the country at the time (i.e. window drive-up, curb service, car hop girls on roller skates, loud '50s rock and roll music, and the place where all the cool kids hung out).

The place to be after football games was at the Duchess and so it wasn't unusual for my best friend, Dale Barker, and I to go there and see what was going on after Granger's first football game. It was on that fateful September night that I saw my first love and fell in love at first sight: a 1950 black Merc coupe owned and operated by Michelle Westbury. Michelle was much like the Merc in that she was tall, well-proportioned, a fun personality, and had black hair. Michelle had everything a guy like me could ever hope for: good looks, brains, a job, money, and a BLACK '50 MERCURY COUPE. I was so much in love with Michelle that I checked out of my 3rd period art class to be with her in her 3rd period biology class. We dated off and on during our junior year and as most high school romances go, we stopped seeing each other after a fast and furious fling.

Michelle sold the Merc our senior year and after graduation married a local boy and moved to Califor-

nia. I hadn't seen Michelle for nearly 26 years until this summer, when she appeared at one of our local Home Builder's Association meetings and introduced herself as the new Ditzler Paint rep for the Greater Salt Lake area. As the president of our local HBA, I was conducting the meeting and had a chance to introduce Michelle as one of our new members. It was in this meeting that I finally had enough courage to confess the truth to our then 28-years-ago romance. The introduction went something like this, "I would like to introduce an old friend of mine from high school, Michelle Westbury. Michelle, I have to confess something to you—no offense, but the crush I had on you in high school wasn't on you at all, but rather on your '50 Merc." The 100 builder members laughed and were amused and thought the last laugh was on Michelle. That's when she stood up and said, "This might sound funny, but I knew it all the time." That's when they really roared and I knew she had one up on me.

Through the years, I have looked high and low for a black '50 Merc that was representative of Michelle's car, but to no avail, until recently at the fall Carlisle Swap Meet when I saw the Mercury. Like years ago, I stopped in my tracks, my heartbeat sped, I began to hyperventilate, my palms were moist, and I felt much like I did 28 years ago at the Duchess—in love again and it felt so good. Needless to say I bought the 36,000 mile original coupe and had it delivered back to Salt Lake. Upon its arrival, the first person I called was Michelle to tell her of my recent purchase. She came over and we took some pictures, laughed, cried and reminisced about her '50 black Merc, the Duchess Drive-in, and the good ole days at Granger High School.

